Integrity Matters

Ontario

News and information for the horse racing community and the general public *Summer 2008*

THESE ATHLETES... TRAIN HARDER, RUN FASTER, AND ARE TESTED MORE RIGOROUSLY THAN OLYMPIANS.

All eyes are on Beijing for these Summer Olympics. Thousands of athletes will compete – and to do so, they will be submitted to a round of unprecedented drug testing.

But throughout Canada, all year long, there are thousands of athletes that train harder, run faster, and are tested for far more substances, far more rigorously, than these world class Olympians.

Who are they? Or more accurately, what are they?

Why, they're horses – racehorses to be precise.

And there's no running, hiding or avoiding tests for these equine racing athletes.

"Canada in fact is one of the world's leading jurisdictions to test race horses for illegal substances," says Dr. Mike Weber, DVM, Manager of Veterinary Services for the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency (CPMA). "Some horse racing countries may test either fewer times or for far less drugs than Canada. We have the ability to test for literally thousands of substances."

In addition to the CPMA, provincial racing regulators are serious about protecting the health of the horse and upholding the integrity of racing. For example, the Ontario Racing Commission conducts a program of 'Out of Competition Testing' that is ordered on the basis of 'probable cause,' such as a change in the horse's performance.

In total, Dr. Weber says Canadian horse racing is stricter, on a day to day basis with its horses, than human athletes are subject to by their agencies.

Over 11,000 athletes will participate in the Summer Olympics and almost half (a record 4,500) will be tested. At the equestrian events, 50 to 60 of the approximately 225 horses will be tested. So how does a competitive racehorse measure up to its human and equine Olympic counterparts?

"We test after every race. We prohibit more substances, more often," says Dr. Weber. "For example, if a human athlete is suffering inflammation or pain in a joint or bone, there is some provision to allow that human athlete to take the medication and race while injured. Not so for horses."

The horse racing community is renowned for its love and compassion for the animal. He says that means, taking steps to protect horses and make decisions they cannot. "On a race day, horses are not allowed to be administered an anti-inflammatory or any other medication that masks pain or an injury. They can not 'decide' to run while hurt."

He also compares horses in a race to a human athlete who might have asthma. "There have been cases where an athlete with asthma can get

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MESSAGE FROM CHAIR ROD SEILING:

"Imagine if we looked at our business *'through the eyes of the horse....'* "

If you are an owner, breeder or trainer of a race horse, if you ride or drive in one of the many exciting races that happen every week in Ontario... or if you work in one of the thousands of jobs created by racing, you are part of a special community.

Our horse racing community is indeed unique. It is a diverse group of individuals and families, large and small companies and various non profit societies. For some in racing, it is a family tradition that dates back generations – for others, it is a new business filled with challenges and, in some cases, doubts and worries. There is a strong, unifying spirit and passion that unites us: that we care passionately about the well being and heath of the horse.

Yes, we are involved in a business and for many it is a needed source of livelihood. As a business, we all need to make decisions driven by the realities of 'profit and loss.' But imagine if beyond this pure business focus, imagine if we looked at our business 'through the eyes of the horse..."

Because we care so much for our equine athletes, everything we do should be rooted in our love and concern for these amazing animals. Sadly, we hear stories of catastrophic injuries like those that brought down that beautiful filly Eight Belles. Many outside of racing wonder if the people in our business really care about the horse. As I have said in this space before, if the public 'perceive' something to be true, the facts and reality take second place.

The efforts and stories of such fine

organizations as the Long Run Thoroughbred Retirement Society and the Ontario Standardbred Adoption Society need to be spread far and wide. They deserve your support.

I am proud of the partnerships and relationships the ORC has developed with others in the community concerned about the welfare of the horse – such as the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), the Ontario College of Veterinarians (OVC), and the Ontario Association of Equine Practitioners (OAEP).

I can assure you that the Board of the ORC is vigilantly doing its part as well. Earlier this year, we introduced bold and significant measures designed to protect the health of the horse, ensure the safety of the participant, and reinforce the integrity of the horse racing industry.

To review the measures designed specifically to protect the health of the horse:

- **The introduction of a Horse Health Passport to curb the over medication of horses due to lack of information**
- **New regulation governing the use and timing of Shockwave Therapy**
- **Licensed Veterinarians – Requirement to use. Only certified professionals should be treating our equine athletes – they have the expertise and knowledge required to know what is good for the horse.**

We will continue to study new ways and perhaps new rules that will reinforce our passion and our responsibility to the animal. Let us all work cooperatively to insure that more and more people outside of racing hear the whole story of how much we care, not simply edited transcripts that do not capture our true feelings.

It is an ongoing responsibility for the racing community and will take our resources and our determined will to make it happen. And it can happen, if we continue to look at things... ***through the eyes of the horse...***

WELCOME, PAM

On June 11, 2008, **Pam Frostad** of Toronto was appointed by the Government of Ontario as a member of the Ontario Racing Commission (ORC) for a period of two (2) years. She has had an involvement in the world of horse racing for well over thirty years – as a racehorse owner and industry marketer. Working with her thoroughbred trainer husband, Pam has gained a first hand knowledge of the changing realities of the horse racing industry.

As well, **Bernard F. Brennan**, D.V.M., of Kemptville, who has served as a Commissioner since 2002, was re-appointed for a one (1) year term on May 7, 2008. I'm pleased to have Dr. Brennan again as a Commissioner. His experience and knowledge of the racing community is a considerable asset to the ORC.

On April 28, 2008, **Jane Garthson** concluded her term as a Commissioner. She was appointed to the ORC Board in 2004 and, among many duties, she chaired the Governance Committee and was an enthusiastic part of our strategic planning efforts. Jane served the racing community with distinction and I want to thank her for her dedicated efforts.

Rod Seiling

Thank you, Jane!

WELFARE, SAFETY AND CONTROL OF THE HORSE:

ORC TO EXAMINE USE OF THE WHIP

In response to calls from the horse racing community, an industry initiative to explore the use of the whip in Ontario horse racing was announced in July by John Blakney, Executive Director of the ORC. Members of the horse racing community will be brought together to a special working session in early September to assess current practice, policy and rules to determine what improvements need to be made.

Representatives of the community will include current and retired jockeys and drivers, horsepeople associations, racetracks, animal welfare agencies and the equine veterinarian community.

Statistical information on the use of the whip in Ontario will be reviewed, as well as actual race video to better understand what is considered to be appropriate and inappropriate use in 2008. The experience and practices of other racing jurisdictions around the world will also be presented.

Historically, whips have played an intricate role in horse training and horse racing. In racing, its use has evolved as a training and control tool to protect the safety of both horses and participants, and a tool for encouraging performance during a race. The horse racing community's varying degrees of opinion on the subject of whip use, and specific requests for rule changes from some standardbred tracks have prompted this industry collaboration on the subject.

Within the framework of social responsibility and concern for the welfare of the horse, the ORC believes that this close examination of the degree of acceptability of the practice may lead to changes, including new rules and levels of enforcement.

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permission to use a bronchodilator to treat the condition. Treating a horse with a similar condition is allowed between races, but not on a race day.

"Our reasoning is fairly straightforward. If a racehorse needs that kind of medication, then it is in no condition to race. A horse should not be allowed to 'race sick'."

But when comparing human testing with those for race horses, the question turns to the use of anabolic steroids, banned in the Olympics and most world class 'human sports.'

"We are very concerned about the overuse of any substance, and that includes anabolic steroids," says Dr. Weber. "It is important though, to take into consideration that anabolics are not as big an issue in horses as they are in humans. There have been scientific studies done to evaluate their effect on horses. The results indicate there is a negligible effect on performance."

He says that steroids help racehorses recover their strength after injuries or stress. Dr. Weber points out that 'anabolic' means 'building up', as in helping tissue to 'rebuild.'

Nonetheless, because the CPMA wants to ensure the fairness of racing, it is continuing its study of anabolics.

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LET US COMMUNICATE MORE!

ARE DRUGS AND ALCOHOL AFFECTING YOUR LIFE?

HELP IS AVAILABLE
Call the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Info line

1-800-565-8603

It's toll-free
It's confidential
It's anonymous
It's open 24 hours

ARE YOU UP TO DATE ON THE LATEST ORC INFORMATION?
Here is just a sampling of information released in the past three months. Check out the "What's New-Archives" at www.ontarioracingcommission.ca for more information.

July 23, 2008 **Notice to the Industry - Change to OSS Stallion requirements approved:** At its meeting of July 3, 2008, the Board of the ORC approved a minor change to the requirements for stallions registered with the Ontario Sires Stakes Program. In dealing with some exemption requests, the Board approved that time spent by stallions in quarantine in North America can be counted towards their requirement to be in Ontario for 170 days.

June 20, 2008 **News Release - ORC releases Report on HIP Review** The ORC released two reports today, representing the results of the comprehensive eighteen-month review of the Ontario Horse Improvement Program. The documents include the Final Report of the Review of the Horse Improvement Program (March 2008), and the 2007 Ontario Racing and Breeding Industry Profile Study. Commissioned by the ORC, the Final Report includes summaries of the industry consultations and the resulting recommendations received from the industry for restructuring the Horse Improvement Program to meet the revised goals and objectives for the Program.

June 9, 2008 **News Release - Crime Stoppers Honours Racing** Ontario's horse racing community was honoured recently at the Annual General Meeting of the Ontario Association Of Crime Stoppers (OACS). The President's Award was presented to the Ontario Racing Commission (ORC) in recognition of the 'unique partnership' that has linked Crime Stoppers with the racing community. ORC Commissioner Brenda Walker and Deputy Director Rob McKinney accepted the award. In his remarks, Mr. McKinney made it clear they were accepting the award on behalf of Ontario's horse racing community. "That community has provided the financial resources to support the Crime Stoppers program..."

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"We already test for steroids that are not approved by Health Canada for therapeutic use in horses.

"We are now doing research to determine the elimination times for those steroids that are approved for veterinary use. Once thresholds and appropriate elimination times are established, we'll take whatever regulatory action is required."

So, who's the real winner, in the human versus horse competition?

Actually, both horses and humans are winners, by a clear cut decision. High standards of testing protect the health of the horse and protect the fairness of the game for the public.

Integrity Matters

A publication of the Ontario Racing Commission, the provincial agency which governs, directs and controls horse racing in any or all its forms in the Province of Ontario.

Rod Seiling ..... Chair
James Donnelly ..... Vice Chair

Bernard Brennan, D.V.M. .....Member
Pam Frostad .....Member
David Gorman .....Member
George S. Kelly .....Member
Brenda Walker .....Member

John L. Blakney ...Executive Director and CEO

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